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The Biography of Imaam Zaid ibn Thaabit

[May Allaah be pleased with him]

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Preface

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allaah, the Most
Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

All praise is due to Allaah. We praise Him; we seek for His help, forgiveness and guidance. We seek refuge with Allaah from the evils of our own souls and misdeeds. None can mislead whomsoever Allaah guides, and none can guide whomsoever Allaah causes to go astray.

I testify that there is no deity worthy of being worshiped except Allaah. He is One and He has no partner. I equally testify that Muhammad is the servant of Allaah and His Messenger.

Allaah says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ﴾

"O you who believe! Fear Allaah (by doing all that He

has ordered and by abstaining from all that He has forbidden) as He should be feared. (Obey Him, be thankful to Him, and remember Him always), and die not except in a state of Islaam [as Muslims (with complete submission to Allaah)]. (Aal 'Imraan 3:102)

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا﴾

"O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him (Adam) He created his wife (Hawwaa (Eve)) and from them both He created many men and women; and fear Allaah through Whom you demand (your mutual rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship). Surely, Allaah is Ever an All-Watcher over you." (An-Nisaa 4:1)

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ۝ يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا﴾

"O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allaah and fear Him, and speak (always) the truth. He will direct you to do righteous good deeds and will forgive you your sins. And whosoever obeys Allaah and His Messenger (blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him), he has indeed achieved a great achievement (i.e. he will be saved from the Hell-fire and will be admitted to Paradise)." (Al-Ahzaab 33:70-71)

To proceed, indeed, the best speech is the Book of

Allaah and the best guidance is that of Muhammad, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him. The worst of all affairs are new things introduced into the religion and every introduced thing is *Bid'ah* [innovation]; and every *Bid'ah* is error.

This is a series of biographies of some scholars and some *Muhadditheen* of this *Ummah* which Allaah has endowed with glory and sublimity till the Day of Judgement. We will focus on private and public aspects of the lives of these scholars, such as their characteristics, manners, etiquettes, knowledge, religiosity and worship. How dire our need to these qualities in this age is! For, there is no way, by which this *Ummah* can reclaim its lost glory and strength except by adopting those qualities that were the characteristics of our predecessors, and to revive what has become extinct of these attributes.

Stories of the lives of these scholars have, for sometime now, become unknown to many Muslims, let alone non-Muslims. This led to the extinction of the light by which the confused find guidance. This light is waiting to be rekindled so that the path (to success in this world and the Hereafter) might continue to be illuminated. People are now fed up with mere talks. They now want to see the reality of this religion, as was the case during the time of those scholars and other Muslims who followed them.

Living the reality of this religion was an integral part of the lives of these outstanding scholars. Their breathings and movements were all for Allaah. When they spoke, they did so for the sake of Allaah and when they kept

Introduction

All praise is due to Allaah, Lord of all the worlds; He is the One Who can never be adequately described by the describers nor can the depth of His greatness be grasped by the thinkers. He accurately enumerates and knows everything. And His servants encompass nothing of His knowledge except that which He wills. All things humble themselves before Him and all difficult things fall apart in front of Him. His command is implemented in whatever He wishes and He decides whatever He wills.

﴿وَإِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ﴾

*"When He decrees a matter, He only says to it: "Be!"
– and it is." (Al-Baqarah 2:117)*

He decides the truth and He is the Best of deciders. His is the mercy and favor and His is the power. He is One and the Only Lord. His is the sovereignty and He has no partner, rival or equal. He is too great to be likened to anything. And unto Him shall all things return.

I praise Him much in the number of His creatures and words and as much as His earth and heaven could fill. And I beseech Him to grant mercy and blessings to

Merits of the Companions

Allaah says:

﴿رَبَّنَا وَأَبْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ﴾

"Our Lord! Send amongst them a Messenger of their own [and indeed Allaah answered their invocation by sending Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him)] who shall recite unto them Your Verses and instruct them in the Book (this Qur'aan) and Al-Hikmah (full knowledge of the Islaamic laws and jurisprudence or wisdom or Prophethood), and purify them. Verily! You are the All-Mighty, the All-Wise."
(Al-Baqarah 2:129)

He also says:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ
وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ﴾

"He it is Who sent among the unlettered ones a Messenger [Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him)] from among themselves, reciting to them His Verses, purifying them (from

the filth of disbelief and polytheism), and teaching them the Book (this Qur'aan, Islaamic laws and Islaamic jurisprudence) and Al-Hikmah (As-Sunnah: legal ways, orders, acts of worship of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him). And verily, they had been before in manifest error." (Al-Jumu'ah 62:2)

The above Verses evidently indicate perfect harmony that existed between the Messenger of Allaah, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him and his Companions.

In the Verses, Allaah mentions one of the missions for which the Messenger, was sent. The Prophet, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him carried out this mission perfectly; and through him, Allaah salvaged mankind from the clear error and from polytheism and disbelief into faith and monotheism.

The Messenger of Allaah, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him lived among his people in Makkah. Allaah sent him as a Prophet from among them and hardly would you find a clan of Quraish with whom he did not have blood relationship. He even had blood relationship with the *Ansaar*—the Helpers—may Allaah be pleased with them. For, the maternal uncles of Abdul-Muttalib, the Prophet's grandfather belonged to the clan of Banu Najjaar, whose abode was Al-Madeenah.

Allaah, the Almighty decreed that Muhammad, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him should hail from the noblest lineage—the descendants of Prophet Ibraaheem, peace be upon him and He sent

him from the best place on the face of the earth—Makkah Al-Mukarramah.

He was the answer to the supplication of his forefather, Ibraaheem, peace be upon him. He is the leader of children of Adam. His is the Praiseworthy Stand, the Lake Fountain, the greatest intercession of the Day of Resurrection and the High Status. His is the best of all mankind and the leader of all the Messengers.

It is a manifestation of Allaah's perfect favor on His Prophet, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him that He selected for him the best Companions in terms of understanding, bravery and gallantry. They were also the best of all mankind in lineage and the noblest of them in character. This is according to a saying of the Prophet:

«النَّاسُ مَعَادِنُ، فَخَيْرُهُمْ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ خَيْرُهُمْ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ إِذَا فَقَهُوا»

"Those who were the best in the pre-Islaamic period of ignorance will be the best in Islaam provided they comprehend the religious knowledge."^[1]

It is not unknown to you that Allaah selected Kinaanah from the children of Ismaa'eel, and Quraysh from Kinaanah, and Banu Haashim from Quraysh. He also selected Muhammad from Banu Haashim. The Banu Haashim are, therefore, the noblest of the Quraysh clans. They were the ones besieged in the valley along with the Messenger of

^[1] Al-Bukhaaree (3383); Muslim (2526).

Who were those he ate and drank and wanted to be with?

Who were those who prayed behind him and listened to his sermons and admonitions?

Who were those he used to visit and who used to visit him?

Who were those who spent their wealth in his cause?

Who were those who sacrificed their lives in the way of the religion he brought?

Who were those who transmitted the Qur'aan from him?

Who were those who received his message and conveyed it to others?

Who were those who were with him in his lifetime, performed funeral prayer on him after his death, and were enormously distressed by his death?

They are definitely his noble Companions – may Allaah be pleased with them.

The following is therefore, some illuminating pages on the life of one of the Prophet's noble Companions. He is Zayd ibn Thaabit – may Allaah be pleased with him.

Zayd was an epitome of knowledge and action and a typical example of the most unique generation the humanity has ever seen.

His Name and Lineage

He is Zayd ibn Thaabit ibn Dahhaak ibn Lawdahaan ibn 'Amr ibn 'Awf ibn Ghunm ibn Maalik ibn Najjaar ibn Tha'labah. He is the great *Imaam*, the chief of the experts in Qur'aanic recitation and law of inheritance, the *Mufti* of Al-Madeenah, Abu Sa'eed and Abu Khaarijah Al-Khazraji An-Najjaari Al-Ansaari. He was one of the Prophet's scribes who wrote the revelations – may Allaah be pleased with him.^[1]

His Kunyah (Nickname)

His nickname is Abu Sa'eed or Abu Khaarijah.^[2]

His Birth and Growing Up

He was born 11 years before *Hijrah*. He was then 11 years old when the Messenger of Allaah, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him migrated from Makkah to Al-Madeenah. He was six years old during the

^[1] *Siyar A'laam An-Nubalaa* 2/426.

^[2] *Al-Ahaad Wal-Mathaani* 4/85; *Mashaaheer 'Ulamaa al-Amsaar* 1/10.

battle of Bu'aath^[1] in which his father was killed.^[2]

Zayd ibn Thaabit said, "The battle of Bu'aath took place while I was six years old. It took place five years before the Prophet's emigration from Makkah to Al-Madeenah."^[3]

His Father

His name is Thaabit ibn Dhahhaak. He was killed during the battle of Bu'aath.^[4]

His Mother

Her name is Nawaar bint Maalik ibn Sarmah from the clan of 'Ady. She narrated *Hadeeth* from Allaah's Messenger, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him and Umm Sa'd bint As'ad ibn Zuraarah reported *Hadeeth* from her.^[5]

Umm Khaarijah reported that Nawaar, mother of Zayd ibn Thaabit informed her that she saw As'ad ibn Zuraarah—before the Prophet's emigration to Al-Madeenah—leading people in the five obligatory prayers and leading them in *Jumu'ah* prayer in a mosque he had built. And when the Messenger of Allaah, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him came to Al-Madeenah, I saw him praying in that

^[1] Bu'aath is a place in Al-Madeenah where a great battle took place between the clans of Aws and Al-Khazraj. Most of the nobles and leaders of these two clans were killed during this battle.

^[2] *Usud Al-Ghaabah* 2/126.

^[3] *Tahdheeb Al-Kamaal* 6/435.

^[4] *Ibid.* 6/433.

^[5] *Al-Isti'aab* 4/1919.

mosque."^[1]

Nawaar, Zayd's mother said, "My house was the tallest house around the mosque. Bilaal used to make the call to prayer from the rooftop of my house. When the Messenger of Allaah, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him finished building his mosque, he then made the call to prayer from the rooftop of the mosque."^[2]

His Wives

1. Umm Jameel bint Qutbah ibn 'Aamir al-Ansaariyyah: She is from the clan of Bani Sawad. Ibn Habeeb mentioned her name in his book '*Al-Mubaaya'at*'. Ibn Sa'd said: "She was previously married to Uthmaan ibn Khaldah ibn 'Aamir for whom she had a daughter named Umaamah. She then married Zayd ibn Thaabit and after him, married Anas ibn Maalik."^[3]

There was a controversy regarding her name. Some historians say her name is Faatimah, some say her name is Juwairiyyah. She was one of the early converts to Islaam and she migrated to Abyssinia along with her husband. When her husband died, she married Zayd ibn Thaabit for whom she had Sa'eed. Umm Jameel is therefore one of those who performed the two emigrations: the first one to Abyssinia and the second one to Al-Madeenah.^[4]

^[1] *Siyar A'laam An-Nubalaa* 1/302.

^[2] *Tabaqaat Ibn Sa'd* 8/419.

^[3] *Al-Isaabah fee Tamyeez As-Sahaabah* 8/218.

^[4] *Al-Istee'aab* 4/1927.

blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him.

He was one of the scribes who wrote revelations for him. He reported narrations from Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthmaan.^[1]

His Students

Zayd ibn Thaabit was one of the pious scholars. That is why he had great students and the knowledge he taught was spread far and wide.

Ali ibn Al-Madeeni said, "None of the Prophet's Companions had as many students who preserved their sayings on Islaamic jurisprudence except three: Zayd, Abdullaah ibn Mas'ood and Abdullaah ibn 'Abbaas."^[2]

Abu Hurayrah and Ibn 'Abbaas reported narrations from him. Among those who learnt the Qur'aan from him are Ibn 'Abbaas, Ibn Umar, Abu Sa'eed Al-Khudri, Anas ibn Maalik, Sahl ibn Sahd, Abu Umaamah ibn Sahl, Abdullaah ibn Yazeed Al-Khatmi, Marwaan ibn Al-Hakam, Sa'eed ibn Al-Musayyab, Qabeesah ibn Dhu'ayb, his two sons Khaarijah and Sulaymaan, Abaan ibn Uthmaan, 'Ataa ibn Yasaar, Sulaymaan ibn Yasaar, Ubayd ibn Sabbaaq, Qaasim ibn Muhammad, 'Urwah, Hajar Al-Madari, Taawoos, Busr ibn Sa'eed and many more.

His Position among the Companions

Zayd enjoyed a high position among the Companions. He was one of the closest Companions to the Prophet,

^[1] *Siyar A'laam An-Nubalaa* 2/472.

^[2] *Ibid* 2/438.

blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him. He was also one of the closest persons to his successors, Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthmaan. It is enough an honor for him that he was one of the scribes entrusted with writing down the revelations for the Messenger of Allaah, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him. It was also enough an honor for him to be among those who compiled the Qur'aan.

Ibn Is'haq said, "Zayd was one the scribes who recorded the revelations. He also wrote the Prophet's letters to the kings. Whenever Abdullaah ibn Al-Arqam and Zayd ibn Thaabit were absent and the Prophet, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him needed to write to some heads of armies, kings or personalities, he would ask whoever was around to write the letter."^[1]

Adh-Dhahabi said, "He was one of the bearers of the proof. Umar used to appoint him to manage the affairs of Al-Madeenah when he was on *Hajj*. He was the one who portion out the booties of the battle of Yarmook. His father was killed during the battle of Bu'ath that took place before the Prophet's emigration. So, he was raised an orphan and he was very intelligent. When the Messenger of Allaah, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him migrated to Al-Madeenah, Zayd embraced Islaam though he was then eleven years old. The Messenger of Allaah, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him commanded him to learn Jewish writing so that he could read their messages to him and said: 'I do not trust them.'"^[2]

^[1] *Al-Istee'aab* 3/865.

^[2] *Siyar A'laam An-Nubalaa* 2/427.

there is no abundant need for transmission. Hence, what is narrated in isolation and not successively could not be part of the Qur'aan."



Lines of Defence against the Qur'aan and the *Sunnah*

A keen observer of the above and similar misconceptions would realize that the aim of the antagonists was to discredit the Qur'aan through disparaging the Companions of the Prophet, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him. Sometimes, they would claim that when the Qur'aan was been collected, the Companions did not know by heart and that those who knew it by heart were already dead or martyred before it was collected. Other times, they would claim that the Companion did not verify the Verses of the Qur'aan while they were compiling them and they muddled up the Verses, and added and omitted whatever they wished in the process.

In fact, there had been ferocious attacks against the Qur'aan in this aspect that if we had to enumerate all the antagonists' misconceptions about the Qur'aan this book would not be enough.

There enemies of Islaam had also launched many attacks against the Prophet's *Sunnah* through disparaging the Companions—may Allaah be pleased with them. Sometimes, they would criticize

Muslim is permitted to abandon any ruling from the Qur'aan or the *Sunnah* that is not abrogated."^[1]

Performing 'Umrah before Hajj:

Aflah narrated that Zayd ibn Thaabit was asked about a man who performed 'Umrah before performed Hajj and he responded, "They are two acts of worship. You are not harmed by any of them you performed first."^[2]

Two siblings with mother (a case in the law of inheritance)

'Ali, 'Abdullaah ibn Mas'ood and Zayd ibn Thaabit — may Allaah be pleased with them — said that two siblings of a dead person reduce his mother's share of his estate from one third to one sixth, as done by a group of siblings. This is the opinion of the majority of the scholars of Hijaz and Iraq. There is no disagreement among them on this.^[3]

Following the Funeral Procession:

Following the funeral procession is *Sunnah*. Al-Baraa — may Allaah be pleased with him — said, "The Messenger of Allaah, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him commanded us to follow the funeral procession."^[4]

Following funeral procession is of three kinds:

One: To participate in performing funeral prayer on

[1] *Al-Istidhkaar* 1/277.

[2] *Ibid* 4/91.

[3] *Ibid* 5/331.

[4] *Al-Bukhaari* (1182).

the dead and then move away without following the procession. Zayd ibn Thaabit said, "If you take part in the funeral prayer you have carried out your obligation."

Abu Daawood said, "I saw Imaam Ahmad on uncountable occasions performing funeral prayer on the dead and not following the procession or taking permission to go.

Two: To follow the funeral until it is buried in accordance with the Prophet's saying, "Whoever attends the funeral procession till he offers the funeral prayer for it, will get a reward equal to one *Qirat*, and whoever accompanies it till burial, will get a reward equal to two *Qirats*." It was asked, "What are two *Qirats*?" He replied, "Like two huge mountains."^[1]

Three: To stay behind after the burial, and to seek forgiveness for the dead and to ask Allaah to give him steadfastness and to have mercy upon him. It is reported that whenever the Messenger of Allaah, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him finished from burying the dead, he used to stay at his grave and say: Seek forgiveness for your brother, and ask Allaah to give him steadfastness, for he will be questioned now."^[2]

It is reported from Ibn 'Umar that used to recite at the grave of the dead the first and the last Verses of *Soorah Al-Baqarah*.

[1] *Al-Bukhaari* and *Muslim*.

[2] *Abu Daawood* (3221) *Al-Albaani* classified the *Hadeeth* as *Saheeh*.